Programme for Drought Prone Areas

100. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to widen the scope of Drought Prone Areas Programme;

(b) whether suggestions have come from any State Government regarding this; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAVA): (a) From 1st April, 1995, the coverage of Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) has been widened from 627 blocks in 96 districts of 13 States to 946 blocks in 149 districts of 13 States.

(b) and (c) in the Memoranda submitted to the Technical Committee on DPAP and DDP headed by Prof C.H. Hanumantha Rao, former Member, Planning Commission, the Programme States had requested for inclusion of additional blocks under the programme. However the new blocks were included under the Programme in accordance with the criteria of percentage of net irrigated area to net sown area in three eco-systems vis arid somi arid and dry sub-humid determined on the basis of Moisture Index, as rocommended by the Technical Committee for inclusion of blocks/districts under the programme. At present, there is no move to further increase the coverage of DPAP, as 319 additional blocks have been included under DPAP from 1995-96.

Coking Coal Requirement

101. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the total coking coal requirement of Public/Private sector steel producers, pig iron producers and other consumers, during the Eighth and Ninth Five Year Plans;

(b) the present production of washable and direct feed coking coal and what will be the production of coal in Eighth and Ninth Five Year Plan periods;

(c) whether there is a gap between the proposed demand and the availability of coking coal and if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether we have failed to produce required quantity and quality of coking coal to meet the requirements of the country; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor and steps taken to meet the requirements?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) As per assessment of Planning Commission, the total requirement of raw coking coal for iron and steel industry and merchant coke ovens for the terminal year of Eighth Five Year Plan (1996-97) is 40.50 million tonnes. Assessment for the Ninth Plan has not been finalised.

(b) The indigenous production of coking coal linked to washeries and direct feed including blendable variety in 1995-96 is estimated to be 26 million tonnes and projected production of these varieties for 1996-97 (terminal year of Eighth Five Year Plan) is about 27.50 million tonnes.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The indigenous availability of low ash metallurgical coking coal is not adequate to meet the demand of steel plants. Main reasons of the inadequate indigenous availability of such type of coals are;

(i) Prime coking coal reserves are available only in Jharia Coalfield, Bihar where good quality reserves of upper seams have been exploited for over 100 years and have largely depleted.